

less is unworthy of the people we represent, and that is why I oppose this effort launched today by my Republican colleagues.

THE MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would strengthen and add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On the afternoon of December 4, 2007, 30-year-old Gilbert Aguilar was walking to a friend's house in Yucaipa, CA, when he was accosted by four Caucasian men. According to a witness, one of the men called Aguilar a racial slur, and after a brief exchange of words Aguilar continued on his way. Later that night, Aguilar and two friends, Joshua Morales and Ryan Couture, passed by the area where the confrontation had taken place. The four were still there waiting for Aguilar. According to a witness, one of the men in Aguilar's group threw a punch at one of the Caucasian men, provoking Christopher Fulmer to pull out a gun. A witness says Fulmer fired two or three rounds, hitting Couture in the arm and fatally wounding Morales. Fulmer, who has a swastika tattooed on his chest, will stand trial on counts of murder, attempted murder, and a hate crime.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. Federal laws intended to protect individuals from heinous and violent crimes motivated by hate are woefully inadequate. This legislation would better equip the Government to fulfill its most important obligation by protecting new groups of people as well as better protecting citizens already covered under deficient laws. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK WEEK

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to publicly recognize School Social Work Week, which is taking place March 2-8, 2008. This important week honors school social workers, who play a vital role in the development of our young students.

My wife Barbara was a school social worker for more than 18 years, so I understand the critical importance of the services they provide to children, families, and schools. Not only do school social workers provide family and student counseling, crisis intervention, family advocacy, truancy prevention, assistance with basic needs, and com-

munity referrals for long-term needs, but they also assist already overwhelmed and underfunded schools in finding ways to assist their "at risk" students. The presence of school social workers has helped increase attendance rates, academic performance, appropriate behavior, and parental involvement.

I believe the best way we can honor school social workers is by providing them with the resources they need to accomplish their jobs and serve our students. Children often must seek help at school for problems they are experiencing personally, as well as at home. Experts note that early identification and intervention can be beneficial in helping distressed young people cope with and handle the problems in their lives. Without school social workers and the wonderful services they provide, far too many children's needs would remain unaddressed.

For these reasons and countless others, proudly I stand today and applaud the wonderful work of these dedicated individuals. I am pleased that their tireless efforts are being publicly celebrated. It is with great honor that I share their impressive commitment to helping and educating our youth with my colleagues.

RECORD CORRECTION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in yesterday's speech on the executive branch stonewalling of congressional oversight, I erroneously referred to two Egyptian nationals charged with terrorism as former students at Florida State University. In fact, they are former students at the University of South Florida.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF ALT. CONSULTING

• Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize a nonprofit organization that has been making a difference in the lives of Mid-South and Delta small business men and women for the last 10 years, alt.Consulting. Founded in 1998, alt.Consulting has been providing small business owners and entrepreneurs with the tools and advice needed to build their businesses and provide jobs in a region of the country in need of a boost.

When one reads their mission statement, you quickly gets a sense of what makes alt.Consulting different. It reads as follows:

alt.Consulting works with local business owners and entrepreneurs in rural Delta and minority communities to examine, diagnose, start and rebuild businesses. We provide tailored support, skill building, and access to capital to enhance business performance leading to growth and self-defined success.

We act on our ethical and social principles, empowering entrepreneurs to overcome racial, gender, socioeconomic and geographic barriers. We believe this leads to vibrant, entrepreneur friendly and just communities.

Through its comprehensive, affordable assistance to small businesses, alt.Consulting raises the standard of living by enabling profitability for new and growing businesses and preventing business failures. We demonstrate the contributions of healthy small businesses to growing communities with more jobs, wealth building opportunities and a stronger tax base.

With offices in Pine Bluff, AR, and Memphis, TN, alt.Consulting has gone into some of the most impoverished communities in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee and provided the support and assistance needed to get businesses off the ground. The average poverty rate in their target market is a staggering 24 percent. Average unemployment is 8 percent. Even more daunting is that less than 13 percent of the population has a bachelor's degree in the areas they work.

Due to their methodology, though, alt.Consulting has been making a big difference in the Mid-South and the Delta since its inception. In 2006, 195 businesses received one-on-one assistance. As a result, alt.Consulting was responsible for 75 new jobs in a region of the country that had been experiencing negative growth. Moreover, 10 businesses on the verge of failure were saved which protected 700 existing jobs. The sales growth of companies they assisted resulted in \$12.7 million in new economic activity. And their technical assistance resulted in \$430,000 in SBA community express loans to 39 businesses. This gave those existing businesses the working capital to grow and reach new customers.

alt.Consulting is also working with selected communities to train business specialists to replicate their services at the local level. Thanks to support from U.S. Department of Agriculture, the rural community development initiative program, and the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, they have launched new, nonprofit microenterprise programs to provide continuous resources to rural communities throughout the Mid-South.

One such effort, the Pine Bluff Entrepreneurship Collaborative, was started in June 2006 and was comprised of 47 community leaders. Their goals were to create an equity pool to start and expand businesses, identify local resources for small businesses, make health insurance affordable for small businesses, and develop marketing and training workshops.

Youth is also a major focus for alt.Consulting. Recognizing that youth entrepreneurship builds a lifetime of opportunities, alt.Consulting works with partners to help "at-risk" youth start and build their own small businesses. Through one-on-one mentoring and assistance, alt.Consulting has worked to turn their young ideas into a reality.

As a native of Helena, AR, who grew up in the heart of the Delta, I am proud of the impact that alt.Consulting is making in communities throughout my State. They serve as an example of what we can do when we focus on what

we can be, not what we don't have. This program, and others like it, allows us to build on our strengths, to enable our citizens to make a decent living, to encourage our young people to stay at home, and to ultimately build the tax base and enhance the quality of life for us all.

I commend alt.Consulting on their vision and hard work. I am honored to recognize them on 10 great years, and I look forward to seeing the fruits of their labor for years to come.●

RECOGNIZING KELLY'S CLOSET

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Kelly's Closet of Waterford, ME, a woman-owned small business that has helped reinvent a traditional product in a new and environmentally friendly way.

When Kelly Wells founded Kelly's Closet in 2001, there were few options for parents looking for cost-effective, sanitary, and environmentally friendly diapers for their children. Like any good enterprising businesswoman, Ms. Wells identified this underserved market and then moved to supply the demand. At first, Ms. Wells's venture failed to attract the customers for which she had hoped and no orders arrived for 4 months. Despite these early difficulties, Ms. Wells persevered, and eventually her tenacity paid off. The orders that had started off slow rose exponentially, and her business had grown to such an extent that the most significant problem she and her two employees now face is keeping the "shelves" of their virtual store stocked with the company's products. Today, Kelly's Closet combines the Internet's tremendous marketing platform with good old-fashioned Maine friendliness to create a customer experience second to none.

Kelly's Closet offers many different diaper and diaper liner options in a wide variety of fibers, from flannel, fleece, and organic cotton, to more unique choices like rice paper and bamboo. Ms. Wells's notably wide variety of merchandise is easy to identify with catchy names like "Rumpsters," "Knickernappies," and "Tiny Tush." Kelly's Closet also sells additional products from other trusted and well-known companies, including accessories for strollers, diaper bags, and other children's apparel, such as swim diapers for the summer and baby boots and shoes for any time of year.

In addition to a varied selection, Kelly's Closet also helps to educate parents about cloth diapers. For parents, making the right diaper choice can sometimes be a confusing process. To help these parents, Ms. Wells publishes a newsletter and has a special easy-to-use section on her Web site that is dedicated to answering parents' frequently asked questions about diaper fabrics, size, and care, as well as the history of the cloth diaper movement. These additions to her Web site ensure that consumers are well informed before they make their first purchase.

Maine is a State known for its innovators and entrepreneurs, and Kelly Wells is a member of that proud group. Her perseverance, tenacity, and business acumen are a testament to what a small business can accomplish. In 8 years, Ms. Wells has helped transform the way parents purchase diapers and has expanded their possibilities to a great degree. I wish Kelly Wells and all the employees of Kelly's Closet continued success as they grow, innovate, and expand their business.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:25 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1084. An act to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956, and the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to build operational readiness in civilian agencies, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1424. An act to amend section 712 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, section 2705 of the Public Health Service Act, section 9812 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require equity in the provision of mental health and substance-related disorder benefits under group health plans, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4191. An act to redesignate the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park in the State of Ohio as the "Wright Brothers-Dunbar National Historical Park", and for other purposes.

H.R. 4774. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10250 John Saunders Road in San Antonio, Texas, as the "Cyndi Taylor Krier Post Office Building".

H.R. 5159. An act to establish the Office of the Capitol Visitor Center within the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, headed by the Chief Executive Officer for Visitor Services, to provide for the effective management and administration of the Capitol Visitor Center, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5220. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3800 SW. 185th Avenue in Beaverton, Oregon, as the "Major Arthur Chin Post Office Building".

H.R. 5400. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 160 East Washington Street in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, as the "Sgt. Michael M. Kashkoush Post Office Building".

The message also announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, without amendment:

S.J. Res. 25. Joint resolution providing for the appointment of John W. McCarter as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 278. Concurrent resolution supporting Taiwan's fourth direct and democratic presidential elections in March 2008.

H. Con. Res. 286. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Earl Lloyd should be recognized and honored for breaking the color barrier and becoming the first African-American to play in the National Basketball Association League 58 years ago.

H. Con. Res. 292. Concurrent resolution honoring Margaret Truman Daniel and her lifetime of accomplishments.

H. Con. Res. 307. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Members' Congressional papers should be properly maintained and encouraging Members to take all necessary measures to manage and preserve these papers.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 4191. To redesignate the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park in the State of Ohio as the "Wright Brothers-Dunbar National Historical Park", and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 4774. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10250 John Saunders Road in San Antonio, Texas, as the "Cyndi Taylor Krier Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5220. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3800 SW. 185th Avenue in Beaverton, Oregon, as the "Major Arthur Chin Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 5400. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 160 East Washington Street in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, as the "Sgt. Michael M. Kashkoush Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The following concurrent resolutions were read, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 278. Concurrent resolution supporting Taiwan's fourth direct and democratic presidential elections in March 2008; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H. Con. Res. 286. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Earl Lloyd should be recognized and honored for breaking the color barrier and becoming the first African American to play in the National Basketball Association League 58 years ago; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H. Con. Res. 292. Concurrent resolution honoring Margaret Truman Daniel and her lifetime of accomplishments; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H. Con. Res. 307. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Members' Congressional papers should be properly maintained and encouraging Members to take all necessary measures to manage and preserve these papers; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2709. A bill to increase the criminal penalties for illegally reentering the United States and for other purposes.

S. 2710. A bill to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to use an employer's failure to timely resolve discrepancies with the Social Security Administration after receiving a "no match" notice as evidence that the employer violated section 274A of the Immigration and Nationality Act.